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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Soviet Railway System

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I. General

1. The total present length of the railway system of the Soviet Union is 123,000 km. Of this, 33,000 km (26.8 percent) are double tracked; 22,000 km (16 percent) are provided with automatic block signal systems; 45,000 km (36.5 percent) are new style heavy construction. About 40 percent of the total mileage is of light construction (rails under 30 kg per meter, without specially prepared roadbed or else not replaced for a long time).
2. The track gauge is 1.524 meters, in contrast to the standard European 1.436 meters.
3. The rails are preponderantly old and worn out. The maintenance of the tracks and rolling stock varies and in part is inadequate.
4. The distances between stations vary between 8 and 30 km.
5. The main lines connecting the Soviet Union with other European countries and those connecting the large industrial centers have modern equipment (block and signal systems). Changes in the direction of modernization have been planned and are under way on the lines connecting the larger Siberian industrial centers. The ordinary lines to the Asiatic USSR, especially Turkestan, Central Siberia and the Far East, are not yet very efficient.

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6. The prevalence of generally level country makes possible the use of locomotives of limited capacity for long and heavy trains. Since the light roadbed construction permits only low speeds (average 19 km per hour), the attempt is made to offset this disadvantage by the use of heavier trains (up to 2,000 tons).
7. The electrification of the railways is pushed ahead lately, especially in the Moscow and Leningrad areas and the most important industrial districts (Donbas, Ural, Ausbessia⁷) and in the mountainous regions of the Caucasus.

II. Administrative Organization

1. The Ministry of Transportation is responsible for the operation, maintenance and development of the railway lines. The Transport Equipment Construction Ministry is responsible for construction and maintenance of the rolling stock. The railway system is divided administratively into ten railway zones, and the zones are subdivided into numerous administrative districts.
 - a. Northeast Zone (headquarters Leningrad) comprises the districts of Kirov-Murmansk, Archangel, Pechora (Kotlas-Vorkuta), Leningrad, Ottobro (Leningrad-Moscow line), Kalinin, Estonia, Litau.
 - b. East Zone (headquarters Minsk). Districts: Lithuania, Kalingrad (ex-Königsberg), White Russia, Brest-Litovsk.
 - c. Southeast Zone (headquarters Kiev). Districts: Kiev, Vinnitza, Kovel, Lvov, Odessa, Kishinev.
 - d. Central Zone (headquarters Moscow). Districts: Yaroslav, Gorki, Moson-Ryazan, Moscow-Kursk, Moscow-Donbas (Valuiki), Moscow-Kiev, Moscow (Outer Circle).
 - e. Donets Zone (headquarters Kharkov). Districts: Donets North, Donets South, Kharkov, Voronezh-Likhaya, Stalingrad, Lower Dnieper and Crimea (Stalino).
 - f. Caucasus Zone (headquarters Krasnodar). Districts: North Caucasus, Ordzonikidze, Azerbaijan, Transcaucasia.
 - g. Volga Zone (headquarters Kazan). Districts: Kazan, Kuibyshev, Orenburg, Ryazan-Ural (Saratov).
 - h. Ural-Siberian Zone (headquarters Sverdlovsk). Districts: Perm-Molotov, Sverdlovsk, Chelyabinsk-South Ural, Tomsk, Karaganda.
 - i. Middle East Zone (headquarters Tashkent). Districts: Turkestan-Siberia, Tashkent, Ashkhabad.
 - j. Far East Zone (headquarters Krasnoyarsk). Districts: Krasnoyarsk, East Siberia, Transbaikali-Chita, Amur, Far East-Khabarovsk, Primorsk-Vladivostok, Sakhalin.

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III. Main Railway Lines

By main lines, double-track lines are signified. They have a total length of 33,000 km. They are divided into main lines running from Moscow, and main lines connecting other centers with each other.

Main lines running from Moscow:

1. Moscow-Leningrad (651 km). This line has the heaviest traffic in the entire Soviet Union, with an average of about 80 pairs of trains daily. The following branch lines run from the Moscow-Leningrad line:

At Chudovo, a line to Posadnikovo and Volkonstriye on the Leningrad-Murmansk line. A second branch to Novgorod.

At Okalovka, a branch to Nebolci (sic) on the Leningrad-Dimitrov line.

At Bologoye, a branch to Yaroslav and one to Pskov.

At Likhoslavl, a branch to Veliki Luki on the Moscow-Riga line.

The Leningrad-Moscow main line is provided with a signal system and is of heavy construction. A large part of the line was newly built after 1945. The most vulnerable places on the line are three: the Volga bridge at Kalinin, the rail junction at Bologoye, and the Volkhov bridge at Chudovo.

2. Moscow-Riga main line (922 km) has the following branches:

At Novosokolniki, a branch to Dno-Batstakaya (sic)-Leningrad, and another to Nevel-Polotsk and Vitebsk.

At Rezekne, a branch to Pskov and another to Daugavpils.

At Krustpils, a branch to Daugavpils and another to Jelgava-Tukums-Ventspils (on the Baltic).

At Plavinas, a local line to Malona-Kupuna-Gulbens-Ape.

At Riga, a recently electrified line 369 km long to Tallinn.

The entire Moscow-Riga line is heavy construction and has been completely rebuilt since 1945. It has about 60 pairs of through trains daily. The sensitive points on this line are the railway junction at Novosokolniki, the crossing (Duna bridge) at Krustpils, and the railway junction at Riga.

3. Main line Moscow-Minsk-Kaliningrad and Minsk-Brest-Litovsk. The Moscow-Minsk line is 747 km long. It forks at Minsk into the Minsk-Vilna-Kaliningrad line, 522 km long, and the Minsk-Brest line, 349 km long.

- a. The Moscow-Minsk line has the following branches:

At Vyazma, three branches: to Rzhev on the Moscow-Riga line; to Tula, on the Moscow-Kharkov line, and to Bryansk on the Moscow-Kiev line.

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At Pastov, a very important double-track line 415 km long to Platikatki (sic). It was built completely new, but in light construction.

At Kazatin, an important double-track line 415 km long through Berdichev, Rovno and Kivertsi (sic) to Brest.

At Kalinovka and Vinnitsa, some local lines.

At Shmerinka (sic), two single-track but important branches; one through Vapnyarka (sic), Rudnitsa, Slobodka, Kotovsk and Nazdelnaya (sic) to Odessa; the other to Oknitsa (sic), Chenevskiy, Beltsi, Ungeni, Kishinev, Benderi, Bessarabskiy, Prut, Beni and Ismail.

At Grechany, a local line to Kamenets-Podolsk.

At Tarnopol, a line to Starynshty, Beliston (sic) and Bakhiv (sic) on the Rumanian border.

At Lvov, the main line from Moscow divides into two important lines. One goes to Przemyśl, and the other to Batovo, Ciop and Uzhgorod on the Czechoslovakian border. The Moscow-Konotop section of this line was double-tracked in 1946 to 1950. The rest of the line was relaid with heavier construction after the war. This line carries very heavy traffic. Its daily capacity is about 70 pairs of trains. The line is of great strategic importance because it connects Moscow with all southeastern Europe. It has many vulnerable points, such as the crossings of the great rivers like the Dnieper and the Dniester.

5. Main line Moscow-Tula-Orel-Kharkov-Lozovaya-Rostov connects Moscow with the southern Ukraine and Crimea. It is 1,351 km long and has the following branch lines:

At Tula, a double-track line to Uzlevaya, and a second one to Kaluga-Tikhinova (sic) on the Moscow-Kiev line.

At Orel, a double-track line of 549 km Orel-Moscow-Gosel-Kalinkovichi.

At Kursk, a double-track line, Kursk-Lgov-Lozovaya-Konotop, with 60 pairs of trains daily.

At Sarayevsk and Belgorod, local branch lines.

At Kharkov, a branch to Gotnya-Lgov-Havlya, double-track with about 70 pairs of trains daily; another double-track branch 350 km long to Yama-Nikitovka-Debalzevo.

At Lozovaya, a double-track line 179 km long to Laporozhe, and from there a single-track line to the Crimea through Vedrovka-Selitopol-Dshankoy-Simferopol-Sevastopol.

At Konstantinovka, an important double-track line 170 km long to Yasinovaya-Staling-Volnovakha-Mariupol; newly rebuilt, but of light construction.

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At Nikitovka, an important junction point from which various lines run to south Russia.

At Gorlovka, an electrified double-track line to Debalzevo.

At Taganrog, an important connection to the Black Sea.

At Rostov, lines to the Caucasus.

The Moscow-Rostov main line was heavily damaged during World War II. It was completely rebuilt with heavy construction and an automatic signal system. Its daily capacity is about 70 pairs of trains.

6. Main line Moscow-Ozherelye-Valuyki-Kupyansk-Debalzevo (Rostov).

- a. This line is 966 km long with the following important junction points: Osherelye; Uzlovaya (double-track branch to Tula); Volovo; Elec (Yelyatz); Kastornaya; Stary Oskol; Valuyki; Kupyansk (branches to Kharkov and Belgorod); Popasnaya; Debalzevo. At Valuyki a branch line goes off to Liski-Poverine-Blashov-Rtishchevo-Penza-Syzran; 1,100 km long and double-tracked.
- b. At Debalzevo, an important 497 km branch line to Yasinovataya-Dayepetrovsk-Piatikhatki-Dolgintsevo-Krivoi Rog.
- c. Most of the Moscow-Debalzevo line was built after the war. It is heavily constructed with automatic signal system and has a daily capacity of about 70 pairs of trains.

7. Main line Moscow-Ryazan-Liski-Millerovo-Rostov-Armavir-Baku, 2,550 km long. Its main junction points are as follows:

Kolonna, junction point of the electrified line from Moscow.

Ryazan, where the 3,818 km trans-Siberian line to Inzasiban (sic)-Kuybyshev-Chelyabinsk-Omsk-Novosibirsk-Stalinsk begins.

Penza (sic), line to Vornedvye and Penza.

Millerovo, line to Tombov, Rtishchevo and Saratov.

Gryazi

Otroshka (sic)

Liski, junction point for the line Valuyki-Syzran.

Millerovo, line to Kondrashevskaya and Voroshilovgrad.

Likhaya, line to Stalingrad.

Zverevo, line to Debalzevo.

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Batsissk (sic)

Kushchevskaya

Sosika (sic)

Tikhoretsk, lines to Kuberie-Stalingrad and Krasnodar-Novorossisk.

Armavir, branching-off point of the South Caucasus line to Tuspec-Sukhumi-Poti-Samtredia (Batum-Shorapani-Kashuri-Stalinir-Tiflis, where another branch goes off to Leninakan-Erivan-Dzhulia-Mindzhiyan-Osmanli-Noviesaliani (sic)-Astara on the Caspian Sea.

Novinomysskaya

Mineralnyye Vodi, departure point for two electrified branches, to Pyatigorsk and Kislovodsk.

Georgievsk

Prokhladnaya, branches to Nalchik and Astrakhan

Larg Koch (sic)

Beslvi (sic)

Gronzi (sic) /Grozny/

Gudermes

Shamkhal

Makhachkala

Baladzari (sic), line to Sabuski (sic)

Baku

This line is of heavy construction from Moscow to Prokhladnaya and is double-tracked with automatic signal system between Gudermes and Makhachkala. The daily capacity is about 70 pairs of trains. The rest of the line is single track but strongly built. Here the daily capacity is about 30 pairs of trains.

8. Main line Moscow-Ryazan-Inza-Syzran. Kuibyshev-Vladivostok. This line is 9,283 km long. The main junction points are:

Ryazan

Kustarevka

Russyevska (sic)

Inza

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Syzran, branch line to Stalingrad-Likhaya

Kuibyshev

Kinel, branch line to Chekalov and Orsk

Kretoska (sic), junction point of two branch lines under construction: one to Surgut and Agriz, the other to Sterlitamak.

Chishai (sic)

Ufa

Vyazovaya

Berdyush, branch lines to Bakal and Druzhino (sic).

Politayevo (sic)

Chelyabinsk, branch line to Turkestan through Kartaly, Orsk, Khandagso (sic), Aralsk, Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Stalinabad near the Afghan border.

Kurgan, branch line to Sverdlovsk

Petropavlovsk, branch line to Akmolinsk and Karaganda, whence local lines run to Lake Balkash.

Omsk, junction point with the other line from Moscow via Kazan-Sverdlovsk-Tyumen.

Yurga, beginning of the line to Alma Ata near the Chinese (Sinkiang) border.

Taiga, branch line to Tomsk

Achinsk, branch line to Abakan

Krasnoyarsk

Tayshet

Irkutsk

Ulan-Ude

Chita

Kaganovich

Skovorodino

Svobodny

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